



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Indiana

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES SENTENCING OF MAN WHO POSSESSED GUN USED TO KILL OFFICER BRENT LONG

Final defendants sentenced today, seven individuals prosecuted for roles in murder

PRESS RELEASE

TERRE HAUTE – “Today marks the conclusion of a difficult chapter in Terre Haute’s history, but we will not rest in our continued effort to honor the life and service of Officer Brent Long,” said Joseph H. Hogsett, the United States Attorney, in announcing the sentencing of Brad “Pappy” Keller, age 48, to 18 months in federal prison today by District Judge William T. Lawrence. This follows Keller’s guilty plea to charges of illegally possessing a firearm as a convicted felon, a weapon which was subsequently sold to and used by Shaun Seeley in the killing of Terre Haute Police Officer Brent Long on July 11 of last year.

“These convictions represent a groundbreaking legal strategy,” Hogsett added. “I pledge that our office will continue to use every means available to hold accountable all those who put law enforcement officers in harm’s way.”

On July 11, 2011, Officer Brent Long and his K-9 partner, Shadow, entered a Terre Haute residence while serving a warrant on Shaun Seeley for a felony probation violation. Gunfire was heard outside the residence, and after law enforcement officers entered the house, Officer Long was recovered and Seeley, dead of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound, was identified. Officer Long passed away as a result of his injuries.

After discovering that state law did not provide an effective path of prosecution against those involved in the killing, the U.S. Attorney’s Office assisted with the opening of a federal investigation into Officer Long’s death. Led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), this effort resulted in last year’s indictment of seven Terre Haute residents.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthias D. Onderak, who prosecuted the case for the government, seven defendants have now been sentenced for their roles in the shooting. That

includes five individuals, Heather Elkins, 23, Charles Elkins, 23, Roberta Utterback, 51, Jenny Torres, 23, and Jesse Padgett, 21, who all admitted to making a material false statement to law enforcement in relation to the events of that day.

Two individuals, Scott Griffy and Brad “Pappy” Keller, pleaded guilty to charges in connection with their alleged illegal possession and sale of the weapon used in the shooting. Specifically, Keller admitted to illegally possessing the 9mm pistol used by Shaun Seeley in killing Officer Long. That firearm was later obtained by Scott Griffy, also a convicted felon, who was sentenced to seven years in prison in August on charges relating to the illegal sale of the weapon to Seeley shortly before the shooting.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthias D. Onderak, who prosecuted the case for the government, Keller is a five-time convicted felon, including prior convictions for burglary and attempted burglary in Vigo County. Keller was on probation for drug charges relating to the possession and production of methamphetamine when he was arrested.

Since filing these charges, the United States Attorney’s Office has used the “Terre Haute” prosecution strategy in two other police-related shootings. In January 2011, Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department Officer David Moore was gunned down by an illegally-armed convicted felon during a routine traffic stop. Last week, Hogsett announced charges against an individual alleged to have illegally possessed and sold the firearm used by the convicted felon to murder Officer Moore.

Similarly, Hogsett recently announced charges against another individual who is alleged to have illegally sold a firearm to a convicted felon who later used that weapon to wound IMPD Officer Dewey Runnels during a routine traffic stop.

“Our commitment is real, and our resolve is unwavering,” Hogsett added. “This office simply will not tolerate violence against our law enforcement officers, just as we will not allow the lawless behavior that enables such tragedies to go unpunished.”

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